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**Brain-washing**  
Brain-washing is a crude and unexcused term mistakenly put forward in 1951 as the translation of a Chinese phrase, but it has since become a cliché. A good deal of work has been done on the processes of indoctrination and intensive indoctrination in China, with the aim of restoring information and remoulding thought. The confessions which were made public during show trials (such as that of Cardinal Mindszenty) led many people to suppose that new techniques of an unprecedented kind were being employed, possibly with the aid of hypnosis or drugs, to bring about expressions of guilt by accused persons which were quite out of character and baseless.

During the Korean War the Chinese were able to produce confessions of bacteriological warfare by U.S. Air Force prisoners of war; how the communists managed to bring this about became a matter of public concern in the United States, and a number of detailed inquiries were made, chiefly by means of interviews with repatriated United States prisoners. A coherent picture emerged of "thought reform", which did not depend on drugs or applied Pavlovian techniques, but on systematic undermining and substitution. Physical torture as a means of forcing unwilling people to disclose information is an old and widespread practice, much used, for example, by the Nazis; it was, however, played only a small part in the system developed by the Chinese. They were less concerned with ascertaining facts than with altering men's opinions and changing their values. To this end the Chinese devoted an amazingly determined effort.

They were indebted to the Russians for important elements in their treatment of suspects and "reactionaries": guilty of a "crime against the state". Isolation, deprivation of sleep, intimidation, endlessly repeated accusations of lying, maintenance of very painful postures, abrupt change of attitude by the interrogator, from vilification to friendly understanding and compassion, and then back again to severity, public confession at a "trial", and prevention of contact with relations or friends—these are basic features of both the Russian and the Chinese systems. Though they are mostly based on a long empirical experience, these measures can now be viewed also against a

background of findings in Western physiological and psychological laboratories. The effects of sensory and social deprivation have been closely studied on volunteers and men in prison.

Wakefulness prolonged up to 112 hours, it has been shown, can lead to hallucinations, paranoid reactions, and hypochondriacal exaggeration of bodily sensations; speech becomes rambling and thought inconsequent. Semi-starvation has been investigated in normal persons, who volunteered for experiments in which they received only half their normal intake; they became apathetic and depressed, and conspicuously docile, leaving decisions to others. Combination of such stresses and privations imposed on the victims of "ideological reform" conducted to break down their resistance and make them long for relief at any price.

The Chinese aim was ostensibly that propounded by Chairman Mao: "Our object in exposing errors and criticising shortcomings is like that of a doctor in curing a disease... If a person who commits an error, no matter how great, does not bring his disease to an incurable state by concealing it and persisting in his error, and in addition, if he is genuinely and honestly willing to be cured, willing to make corrections, we will welcome him so that his disease may be cured and he can become a good comrade."

The therapeutics accordingly devised for "diseases of thought" were draconian. Anyone suspected of disaffection or bourgeois class background was arrested, browbeaten at a police station, and put in prison. He might be thrust into an already

crowded cell or, more commonly, kept strictly isolated. A period of undernourishment, anxiety, lack of sleep, uncertainty, loneliness, and fatigue preceded interrogation. The style of this could vary, but the commonest form consisted in reviling the prisoner for his reactionary ideas and for failing to make a full confession. He might have leg chains and manacles applied which caused much pain and disability. Mounting pressure, humiliation, and ineffective endlessly repeated would be suddenly replaced by friendly sympathy, approval and promises of relief, which were not kept. The prisoner had to write out a full autobiography and make a confession of guilt (which might be untrue in many particulars); refusal to do so in the required terms was punished by physical brutality. But the declared aim was not punishment for its own sake but change of outlook.

After he had made his first confession, the prisoner was housed in a small cell with about eight others. He found that he must now convince these men that he was thoroughly "reformed". At sessions of "re-education" which took up the greater part of the day, Marxist theory was debated and self-criticism carried to an extreme. On this raw material the other members of the group made hostile comments. They

Information about the process of "thought-remoulding" has been derived chiefly from Americans who had been prisoners of war in China and from Europeans who had been arrested on suspicion of espionage and later released. But the privilege was not reserved for foreigners only. Indoctrination of the whole population was an avowed aim of the Government; it was entrusted from 1943 onwards to Liu Shao-ch'i. How

the Communists were not slow to exploit their gains. Gradually they tightened the screws, at once impressing people with the extent of their "power" making clear the new rules of the game and manipulating social pressures brilliantly to achieve a high level of conformity with a minimum of sheer coercion.

Nationalist captives were put into special re-education programmes. During these they were encouraged to "speak bitterness" (air grievances) against their former officers and regime. Intimidation played a part in enforcing conformity, but with complexity added. Thus when the execution of a dissident had been decided on in a village all the local inhabitants had to join in condemning the man to death and carrying out the sentence by beating him. A former officer in the Nationalist Army described how he had to vote for the execution of two of his friends:

Everyone knew they were condemning their friends to death, but they had no alternative. When they all voted, they were praised by the Communists. At last you understand and accept Communist indoctrination. These people are enemies of Communism and you voted their execution. Then they shot the men down.

Formal acceptance of communist ideology was of little or no account. What mattered was twofold: observing the rules of conduct derived from

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this ideology, and keeping the communist frame of reference and mode of thought constantly in the forefront of attention:

It is required that he learn these principles, that he be able to articulate them, that he relate his activities and thoughts to them, that he judge his behaviour and that of his fellows in these terms, that he continuously reaffirm his loyalty to Communist goals, rules, and values.

The most powerful instrument for this is the criticism meeting, at which there is unsparring attack upon a man's remarks, his work, his mood, his dreams, his casual conversation. It serves the triple purpose of instruction, surveillance, and punishment. A compulsory daily event for every soldier, it is a spur to self-criticism, for fear of damaging criticism by others; public denunciation has long been, in the traditional Chinese set of values, shocking and disruptive in the ultimate shame.

In re-education schools, there may be as many as four group-criticism sessions, each day. This inten-

sive and massive use of criticism distinguishes it from the corresponding practice in Russia and other communist societies, in which it is directed towards limited goals. Mao Tse-tung is reputed to have said that the essential difference between communist and other political parties lies in their use of criticism. To effect a revolution as permanent as Mao wants, the traditional codes and patterns of behaviour must be openly flouted and done away with: consideration of others' self-respect, avoidance of causing any loss of face, must be as determinedly abjured and suppressed as, for example, filial piety. Samuel Meyers risks the generalization that the Chinese, in their established social mores, seek to arrive at harmonious interpersonal relations by observing prescribed rules of conduct and trying to obtain social recognition.

Shaming, or loss of face through public disapproval, is a potent sanction for enforcing group rules of conduct...

One cannot fight against the environment, nor can one manipulate external factors and relationships; one must accept them even though they may seem capricious.

The analogy with some central features of religious conversion has often been pointed out, but the differences greatly outweigh the similarities: confession, for example, and group criticism in religious indoctrination lack the insistent coercive stamp of the "thought reform" programme. A more intimate likeness might be inferred with group psychotherapy. But again, on scrutiny, the parallel is seen to be superficial. Robert Lifton has stressed this, while pointing out that the psychological forces at work in "thought reform" are not new or unique, but represent an exaggerated expression of elements present in varying degrees in all social orders but never before combined so intimately.

It was at one time surmised that

the Russians were using "truth drugs" to elicit information that was being withheld, or to bring about a state of heightened suggestibility in which they would be able to stage a spurious public confession. There is no evidence to confirm this supposition: neither the Russians nor the Chinese seem to have tried this kind of interference, nor have they needed to in order to attain their ends. The same holds true of hypnosis.

The chief desired effect of the procedure was obtained in only a small minority of the prisoners of war subjected to it. However full their confessions were and however satisfactory their eventual conformity while under duress, once they had been released and could "test reality" by finding out what had been going on in the world, the great majority soon discarded the attitudes and disavowed the beliefs inculcated during their period of "thought reform". A small proportion of the indoctrina-

ted men retained personal rightness of their new beliefs, benefits derived from the way they had been through. Most of the information comes from the Korean War, succeeding fifteen years have changed. The Great Leap Revolution no doubt altered the thought reform programme must wait for the information to be provided by prisoners of war. The campaign before the war was to provide a comprehensive record of the result of an embarrassing interpretation of Mao's "education must serve politics", everyone who was educated must be able to read, write, and calculate. The sharp decline of literacy may have had its repercussions on ideological re-moulding. But it is highly improbable that a complex scheme so laboriously and resolutely devised had been drastically changed or

## The superior Viceroy

DAVID DILKS: *Curzon in India. Volume 1. Achievement. 296pp. Rupert Hart-Davis. £3.*

As brave as lions, wild as cats, docile as children. You have to be very frank, very conciliatory, very firm, very generous, very fearless. It is with a sense of pride that one receives the honest homage of these magnificent Sansons: gigantic, bearded, instinct with loyalty, often stained with crime.

Good "Ouida" stuff this, but, when combined with administrative genius and super-abundant energy, effective enough despite its tawdry romanticism. By contrast, his attitude towards the Bengali is wooden and unimaginative.

"I am an Imperialist, and Imperialism is fatal to all their hopes. I hold the scales with exasperatingly even hand, but this is the last thing they desire. I have had a period of peace, and this deprives them of their most fertile source of grumbling."

This sentimental polarization of noble savage and degenerate totem, subsequently to receive classic expression from T. E. Lawrence, became one of the major weaknesses of what passed for the British ideology of imperialism, and a source of countless political mistakes.

Nevertheless, Curzon's brand of imperialistic pride was not without its more worthy aspects. If he despised the Bengalis, he despised even more the routine-bound British bureaucrats and the stupid and occasionally brutal British soldiers with whom he was compelled to work. For in him paternalism was as genuine as devotion to efficiency, and he worked almost beyond the limits of endurance for what he conceived to be India's benefit. It was this sense of commitment to India, and not merely growing megalomania, that put him in his frequent rages against the India Council in London and caused him to write harsh things even to his political friends and admirers, such as Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State.

For the British Conservative government with which he had to deal showed hardly a glimmer of imagination where his 300 million Indian subjects were concerned. When, on the accession of Edward VII, the Cabinet wished to make India meet the expenses not merely of the Durbar in Delhi but of representation at the Coronation in London, Curzon exploded and threatened resignation. Having pointed out to the Boer War and the terrible condition to which she had been reduced by the recent famine, he won his case, but not to the extent of being allowed to make the Durbar to announce specific measures of relief from taxation.

The fascination of Curzon lies in the complexities of his character. That he was a "most superior person" in every sense, goes without saying. For him, India was an immense stage which provided off-rivalled opportunities for showing off. He made few friends and many enemies. While placing his pick and a handful of carefully picked and very competent men, he treated his subordinates like dirt. Yet he was far from possessing the aristocratic's effortless superiority. His delight in driving himself to the limit, his capacity for independent thought, and his belief in his own destiny, and his compulsive urge to assert himself, on all occasions, great and small, were by no means typical of the British ruling class of the late nineteenth century. Indeed, they aroused the suspicions of that class's leading political representatives, Balfour, in most ways Curzon's antithesis, reacted thus to the crown's glory of 1903:

"Our friends are now beginning to rot from the Durbar. They seem unanimous on two things (1) that the show was the best show that ever was shown (2) that George is the most unpopular Viceroy ever seen. Whether this is because his reforms are too good or his manners are too bad seems doubtful. With all this, what a great deal of

paranoia and capacity for self-pity—again not uncharacteristic of the dedicated latter-day imperialist. This is revealed by many passages from the letters quoted by Dr. Dilks, but never more clearly than in the following neurotic effusion, written to his wife:

"Grind, grind, grind, with never a word of encouragement: on, on, on, till the collar breaks and the poor beast stumbles and dies. I suppose it is all right and it doesn't matter. But sometimes, when I think of myself spending my heart's blood here and no-one caring a little damn, the spirit goes out of me and I feel like giving in. You don't know—or perhaps you do—what my isolation has been this summer. I am crying now so that I can scarcely see the page."

Yet the man who could write thus, and speak the most embarrassing flattery, was famous for the mordant wit of his minutes and marginalia.

Clearly, with all his ability and apparent self-confidence, he was not a "sound" man. This one may surmise, among the reasons why he ultimately failed to attain the highest political office. That he was a member of the Lords, not of the Commons, was not the only reason why he was rejected for the Prime Ministership in favour of the pedestrian but reassuring Stanley Baldwin. Admittedly, Lloyd George and Winston Churchill were also "unsound", but, apart from being favoured by circumstances, they compensated for their unsoundness by possessing something that Curzon entirely lacked: the common touch.

Few of these features of his character are specifically mentioned by Dr. Dilks, who, as a good historian, prefers to let the record speak for itself, which it does, loud and clear. Although obviously fascinated by the man himself, and prepared to give him the benefit of every possible doubt, the author is mainly interested in his achievements as an imperial statesman who used the Indian power-base to develop, within the constraints imposed by his responsibility to the Secretary of State and the Cabinet, an independent foreign policy with special reference to the Far East and Middle East. It must be remembered that, in those days, the Persian Gulf and its adjoining territories were part of the Viceroy's parish.

Fear of Russia and determination to resist Russian encroachments were major themes. As might be expected of a man of his temperament, and one so convinced of the vital importance of India for Britain, he frequently advocated and occasionally contrived to execute "forward" policies which aroused misgivings among his colleagues in the British government, whose balance-of-power strategies, sometimes delicate but often fumbling, were not always compatible with his India-centred preoccupations.

Much of the book is therefore devoted to the tortuous negotiations conducted with the other great powers, and particularly with Russia, over spheres of influence in the Gulf, Persia, Afghanistan, Tibet and China. All this is good, well-documented diplomatic history, written from an almost exclusively anglocentric point of view and of greater interest to the specialist than to the general reader, whose reaction is likely to be of the "Alas, unconscious of their doom..." variety.

However, despite the obvious limitations of which the author himself is so well aware, this is a distinguished book, as a biography, as an essay in diplomatic history, and as a contribution—albeit a fairly minor one—to the history of India. Final judgment of it must await the publication of the second volume. In this, if Dr. Dilks succeeds in maintaining his narrative: elegant, there should be some really dramatic stuff.

With all this, what a great deal of

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## Remembering for the Russians

HARRISON E. SALISBURY: *The Siege of Leningrad*, 635pp. Secker and Warburg. £4.4s.

It is a sobering reflection that what took place just in and around the city of Leningrad in the period from the spring of 1941 to the spring of 1945 probably exceeded in scale, as a military contest and a civilian experience, any comparable military drama of earlier centuries in Europe's history, including the Napoleonic invasion of Russia. Yet such are the limitations of human memory and attention that very few persons in the West could have had, before the appearance of Mr. Salisbury's book, anything more than a most rudimentary impression of these happenings, and it is indeed possible that had Mr. Salisbury not laboured as he has to distil the record of them from a wide spectrum of sources—many of them abstruse and not easily accessible—any detailed knowledge of them, even in Russia, would have died with the passing of the generation of eyewitnesses.

The canvas Mr. Salisbury has used for this purpose is a great one, is both the subject. In some 600 pages

of lively and often colourful narrative he has mingled freely accounts of great battles, statistics of mass suffering, shocking traces of Kremlin intrigue, and records—often moving and pathetic—of individual effort, experience and impression. All this is tossed impressionistically together, and some will feel, no doubt, that the profusion is too great, that too much has been included, that the reader's attention cannot absorb such multiplicity of detail. Perhaps, few, certainly, will try to hold clearly in mind, as they go along, the many identification numbers of military units and names and titles of commanders, or to trace on the maps all the place-names, and geographical features involved.

Yet the general impression yielded by this heterogeneity of detail is a powerful one. And not only is it powerful, but it is shocking in its illumination of the Russian leadership both of that time and this: of its fear of the truth (one might almost say *abhorrence* of the truth, as such), its relationship to its own people, and its system of political priorities.

Mr. Salisbury prefaces and ends his account with the final line of some verses by the Leningrad poet, Olga

Berggolts, about the fate of that city during the war and the siege:

Let no one forget, let nothing be forgotten.

He does so advisedly; for if there is any one conclusion that flows clearly from the materials adduced in this document, it is that the Russian leaders both in Stalin's time and after his death, have emphatically failed to incur in Miss Berggolts's injunction. On the contrary: they have shown themselves, ever since 1946, grimly concerned to ensure that no one should fully remember that a great deal, in fact, should be promptly forgotten and permanently concealed. No effort has been spared, over all these years, to obscure the memory and historical record of these events. Military records, including some that were once available to scholars, have now been locked away out of sight. The original Museum of the Defence of Leningrad, closed in 1949 in obvious connection with the Leningrad purge, was reopened in 1957, but only with a curtailed inventory of exhibits; many of the original 60,000 items had by then disappeared. Literary works depicting the experiences of the city have repeatedly been either sup-

pressed or distorted almost beyond recognition by official censorship and re-editing.

Whence this neurotic official sensitivity concerning the wartime fate of Leningrad? Mr. Salisbury contents himself with producing the evidence of the fact; he does not attempt to explain it. Partial explanations suggest themselves. Stalin was always jealous and fearful of Leningrad. It was heroically associated with a phase in the history of the Communist Party in which he had played only an insignificant part—an episode in which his rivals had a proprietary claim and he did not. One must assume, furthermore, that the extent of the reverses suffered on the northern front in the initial phases of the war was enhanced, as it was everywhere else, by Stalin's refusal to permit the Russian forces to be placed in readiness to meet the German attack, even at a time when the Russian Government had no reason to doubt its imminence. It is also true that Russian governments have always had an aversion to admitting the occurrence of catastrophes or permitting them to be talked about, even in instances when they themselves were devoid of responsibility. Cata-

strophes, as the Marquis de Custine observed in 1843, tend to be in official Russian usage like like lapses of fact as the Almighty had been more forgetful of his duty to them.

All these considerations, however, are self-indulgent—indulgent in that it would seem to involve the by-passing of the most important feature of Curzon's viceroyalty: its impact on the Indian nationalist movement, the very thing that gave the rule of the most ostentatious, and perhaps the most brilliant, of our imperial proconsuls its quality of historic irony. Administratively, Curzon's achievement was, perhaps greater than even Dr. Dilks realises. As Professor Spear has written, "there is no doubt that it was his galvanic energy which enabled India to meet the crisis of World War I without a breakdown". Yet it was his very capacity to drive through administrative reforms in the face of sudden resistance or at the most passive acquiescence from the military and civil establishments, that gave new strength to those disaffected "natives" whose machinations he was so anxious to foil. For him, the reorganisation of the University of Calcutta and the partition of Bengal were obvious and overdue acts of administrative rationalization; for the nascent nationalist movement they represented the most extreme of provocations. From the point of view of the British raj, therefore, Curzon's rule was simultaneously a glory and a disaster. It is the glory which occupies Dr. Dilks's attention in his first volume. One wonders whether the disaster will be equally well recounted in its successor. His prefatorial emphasis on "the rending quarrel with Kitchener", an episode of great personal importance for Curzon himself but of marginal significance in modern Indian history, suggests that its treatment may be rather less than adequate.

In Curzon, a specialized knowledge of the mysterious East combined with an arrogant faith in Britain's imperial destiny to produce a degree of political incomprehension that to us, versed in subsequent history, seems well-nigh incredible. One has to be constantly reminding oneself that it was fully shared by most of his compatriots, whose understanding of the Indian situation was indeed far less profound than his. For if he falsely believed that "Congress was tottering to its fall", he did at least comprehend the peoples of the tribal fringes sufficiently well to "pacify" them with excessive use of force and to bring about a frontier settlement with Afghanistan which stood the test of some thirty years. In this field of his proconsular responsibilities his biases and prejudices corresponded quite closely with reality. Loving his enemies on the North-West Frontier, he could convert them into friends of a sort.

I am never so happy as when on the frontier", he wrote. "I know these men and how to handle them. They are

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#### Checklist of Recently Published Books

##### The Poetry of Ben Jonson

J. G. NICHOLS Principal Lecturer in English, Notre Dame College of Education, Liverpool Considers that Jonson's poetry has been unjustly neglected and supports his own high estimate of it by detailed analysis.

30s

##### The Poems of William Blake

Edited with Introduction and Notes by W. B. YEATS  
A reprint of the selection made by Yeats, first published in 1905.

21s

Now in Paperback

##### Yeats the Playwright

A Commentary on Character and Design in the Major Plays  
PETER URB

12s



debarasser de leurs acoties, enténébrés jusqu'au moment où devinrent interchangiables leur différences, nous ferait saisir un monde d'agressivité de déroute.

And behind that again, the sense of someone for whom writing is both experiment and necessity, source of pleasure and survival-kit; (the one way to hold on, to make sense, *Tis* (as it seemed) dauntingly oracular argument of the preface to *M* Pinget's last novel becomes clear in this one: "Pourquoi cette ascèse. Pour décapiver... une vérité tout bête, morale qui est la mienne, mais si profondément enfouie, sous les contradictions que j'ai si gaiement pu saisir." Exquisite renderings of the mediators are *M*, *P*, *G*'s "ascèse" when at heart, "tenable, but to *hear* himself, we catch at something far more delicate. *M* pressed, we watch *M*, *P*inget go. *Why* very private ways.

هذه من اهل



## Restless

JAIN CRICHTON SMITH: *From Harrogate Land*, 61pp. Gillian. 25s.

DAVID MORRISON: *The White Hind and other Poems*, 47pp. CHAIRS. SINGER: *Harbingers*, 48pp. ROBIN FULTON: *Inventories*, 51pp. Calthness: Calthness Books. 12s. 6d. each. (Paperback, 6s.)

PETER WHIGHAM: *The Blue Winged Bee*, 61pp. Anvil Press. 15s.

NATHANIEL TARN: *The Beautiful Contradictions*, Puges unnumbered. Cape Gollard. 28s. (Paperback, 15s.)

PIERRE HUTCHINSON: *Expansions*, 58pp. Dublin: Dolmen Press. London: Oxford University Press. 22s.

It would be charitable not to draw any conclusion about the health of current Scottish poetry on the basis of the first four collections under review. Jain Crichton Smith has written firm, finely judged poems in the past; this poem about an old woman dying is among the best since the war, but *From Harrogate Land* is a disappointing book. The desire to widen his scope of reference and to track away the local caul is healthy enough. In one poem, Hawthorne, rigorous, emblematic, puritan --

As England isn't different from this place I might call Old Scotland.

is rejected in favour of the artist as Dickens, inclusive, untidy, richly profuse. Unfortunately the poems which make their references to golf-clubs, briefcases, the Supplement, &c., do just that. Make a reference. The language has little density, little resonance.

There is the gravity and attentiveness of his best work in Poem 2 ("Entering your house, I shall again / the Free Church air") and Poem 21 (the Free Church inventory at a sale), and in one or two of the love poems there is genuine tenderness. Elsewhere there is a feeling of scrupulousness too impatient with itself. The fact that he can write about an out-party almost as well as, say, William Plomer doesn't seem very important. One can only hope that the restlessness evident here in the shifts of tone and the sense of uncertainty in strained final stanzas will find their focus and confidence in his next book. At his best he is a fine poet.

The new "Modern Scottish Poets" series is attractively produced and simultaneously available in hardback and paperback. Macgibbon casts a long shadow over the aggressive David Morrison and also over Charles Senior, for whom Truth comes always in capitals and many things are "stark": trees, reality, William Burroughs ("stark fare"), even the socks of a suicide ("stark on his stiffening feet"). Under the dated diction and heavy dragging out of a moral, however, there is occasionally a quick and exact eye at work, as when the comitant, "campers; like a started black spider".

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Geoffrey Moorhouse *The Guardian*

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## Hermetic habits

GEORGES MOUNIN: *La Communication poétique, précédée de Avez-vous lu Char?* 296pp. Paris: Gallimard. 17fr.

M. Mounin is a man of moderation and culture, steeped in the French tradition, with a love of the text and a belief in the need for clarity in the conception, as well as in the expression of one's ideas. He is also, however, a man of his time. He feels that René Char's poetry is more meaningful to him than Baudelaire's, and he is well aware of the new trends

in French poetry, as well as the large extent to which M. Mounin's thesis is possible, gradually, to penetrate and appreciate Char's apparently hermetic world. The notion of criticism as the art of reading is not new, of course, and some might dismiss it with impatience as the approach of an old-fashioned dilettante. But M. Mounin's restatement is refreshing and his own elucidation and understanding of Char's work a very satisfactory illustration of his approach. *La Communication poétique* is

### The Inventors

They have come, the people from the other side, total strangers, alien to our ways.

They have come in herds. At the place where the estuaries part from the old Harvest-field, now green and irrigated, a crowd of them appeared. The long march had made them sweat. Their caps were pulled over their eyes, and their weary feet foundered. They stopped dead when they saw us. Obviously they didn't expect to find us there. On the fine earth and well-kept furrows, utterly indifferent to an audience. We gave them a nod and encouraged them.

The most erudite approached, then another just as rootless and slow. We are here, they said, to warn you of the coming hurricane, your most inexorable enemy.

We know about it, like you, only by hours, and from the stories of the old men.

But why are we now innocently happy before you and overcome with child-like euphoria?

We thanked them and asked them to leave. But first something to drink, and their hands trembled and their eyes sparkled in their cups. Men of timber and the axe, built for facing adversity, but inept at mastering water or building houses or painting these with glowing colours. Ignorant of the winter garden or the heavity of joy.

Of course, we could have educated them and conquered them. For the fear of the hurricane is profound. And the hurricane was on its way. But was that worth wasting words on, did it justify altering the future? Where we are, there is no pressing fear.

RENÉ CHAR  
Translated by Alan Bald

In literary criticism. As a professor of linguistics himself, he has no difficulty in appreciating the aims of the structuralists. He himself made a study of linguistics because he believed it necessary for an accurate insight into literature as language and communication, but he feels that the structuralists have missed the point because they ignore the poetic and individual sensibility that lies behind style and structure. He is also critical of the thematic approach adopted by J.P. Richard, because it ignores questions of quality.

Sensibility and quality, these are M. Mounin's chief preoccupations. The art of criticism, he says over and over again, lies in learning how to read. To this he might add that sympathy and admiration are also valuable ingredients. M. Mounin himself has been a reader of Char

really rather a complex book, although it is extremely easy to read. In a relaxed sort of way, M. Mounin examines various aspects of the critic's role and of Char's work. His comments on individual poems will be stimulating and helpful to many readers, especially those coming to Char's poetry for the first time.

Apart from these illustrations of the reader at work, M. Mounin is chiefly concerned with two aspects of Char's work: his hermeticism and his relations with Surrealism. Char's hermeticism is a problem, to put it mildly, for all of his readers. M. Mounin confesses that after thirty years he still only understands about 30 per cent of Char's work.

In trying to justify Char's obscurity, he looks at the hermetic poetry of earlier generations. He finds Mallarmé's hermeticism unhealthy because it deliberately seeks to frustrate communication; he feels that Valéry's hermeticism was merely an "art d'extorquer au lecteur une certaine activité d'esprit", and that the metaphysical hermeticism of much modern poetry is nothing but a "caricature". Char's obscurity, on the other hand, is of the kind that is inevitably inherent in any attempt to express emotional experience in poetic terms. His poetry is, therefore, not always obscure; some of it is, in fact, very obvious.

Char's hermeticism does, however, derive to some extent from his association with Surrealism. As M. Mounin points out in his criticism of the Surrealist concept of the image, Surrealism's real contribution to this field was not in the dazzling effects of the arbitrary image, but in the exploitation of the "raccourci psychologique et syntaxique". It is this principle which is so much at work in Char's poetry and, indeed,

in Eluard's, as well, and which M. Mounin's thesis is possible, gradually, to penetrate and appreciate Char's apparently hermetic world. The notion of criticism as the art of reading is not new, of course, and some might dismiss it with impatience as the approach of an old-fashioned dilettante. But M. Mounin's restatement is refreshing and his own elucidation and understanding of Char's work a very satisfactory illustration of his approach. *La Communication poétique* is

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## Oddities

ARNOLD RATTENBURY: *Causes*, 48pp. Chamois. 16s.

CHRISTOPHER LEVENSOM: *At the Door of the Atlantic*, 30s. Dolmen Press, London: Oxford University Press. 30s.

ALAN JACKSON: *The Wayfarer*, 64pp. Faber Press. 25s.

Arnold Rattenbury is an old poet who has not yet found his medium (for his originality, poems in his first volume are surface light-hearted, yet the intent that the author has set for his motive is not quite realized). And the hurricane was on its way. But was that worth wasting words on, did it justify altering the future? Where we are, there is no pressing fear.

Better than that, Christopher Levensom's dull collection, *At the Door of the Atlantic*, which never dares to put a new direction yet, even so, to go completely astray. It is the most abject tribute to Levensom's "Dead Centre" one could find.

Leathered in black and apples striped. They strut into clearings of light, cool commotion. Also a memorial to Sylvia ("Cairns").

As the search is called off let the shadows, the survivors like a mist. All words are called in question.

vigour, movement, during. And though words fail to do what they do in the mist their story would be as Cairns.

It might have sounded more as a memorial to Eleanor Rigby. Anthony Kerrigan's book, *At the Door of the Atlantic*, produced collection containing enjoyable lyrics about Dublin, several transparent love poems, much which is totally opaque.

Rectitude is not a balance nor an undiscovered hemisphere but the look shut against the yellow tongue of bursting myrtles swarming in a void.

As for Alan Jackson, *The Wayfarer* is a poem which aims at being trivial or too ingenious, or both. One or two of the longer poems, the love and anger, suggest feeling but most are simply laughs.

## Old Boy on the swan

RUPERT GRAYSON: *Voyage not Completed*, 217pp. Macmillan. £2.35.

Mr. Grayson has dedicated this beautiful volume of autobiographical table-talk to seven masters and companies "on whose ships I have enjoyed hospitality for many voyages". And how much the other people sitting at the captains' tables have enjoyed his flow of reminiscence, accompanied by appreciation of a good wine list and the chef's triumphs!

He was one of the dozen children of Sir Henry Grayson, Bt., a Liverpool shipbuilder and repairer. The spoon in his mouth was not more completely. This was because "a meditation replete with a wealth of family, they were means de la poésie; et non, happy."

In our brother-and-sisterhood we were complete in ourselves, inviolate and impenetrable, leading our own secret lives with our own secret language, a world in which our parents, however much we loved them, were never a part. To this day in the company of others our eyes will meet, and even with no words we know what the other is thinking.

With all there was a lively appreciation of parental character:

Father tended to look on illness as a display of weakness by its victim. On board ship, no matter how bad the weather, we were forbidden to be sick. At any sign of our disobeying these orders we would be made to run round the deck until we were too exhausted to do anything but sleep. As a result of failing to keep within my budget, because a bill for £800 had just been received from Debenhams, Mother replied laughingly: "How dare you say that I'm not economising! I only last week told Mr. Loring to cancel the Daily Mirror."

Rupert inherited, it seems, the traits of both parents: from his father not the passion for work, but the susceptibility to pretty women and the urge to travel from the best hotels to the best hotels on the best trains and ships; from his mother the ability to tell a story better than she heard it, and the view money as the worthless thing it is, if there is someone to provide it. (The once sent his father a beautiful Easter Egg, containing his outstanding bills, running into four figures; his father paid them.)

After an undistinguished career at Bilston Grange and Harrow (Eton and Winchester were too long-lying to be healthy), Rupert volunteered in August, 1914, at the age of seventeen, for the King's Liverpool Regiment. Father intervened and focused on Sandhurst; but when

Rupert failed to pass the entrance examination, he entered the Irish Guards with a direct commission.

Of the First World War, from which thanks to two wounds, he emerged alive, he writes with feeling for fallen comrades, such as Rudyard Kipling's son, John. Kipling himself comes across vividly, even though the judgment that he was the greatest English poet of his time seems extravagant.

After the war, Rupert, like many who could not afford it as well as his father enabled him to, decided to enjoy himself. He was, like the heroes of P.G. Wodehouse's novels, a survivor from the Edwardian era, a playboy, a stage-door johnny, only working when compelled to by his long-suffering father. He wanted to write—but what had he to write about, he asked himself when Kipling was a bit tepid about a thriller. He joined Eveleigh Nash as a publisher, with an injection of £8,000 of paternal capital. It was boring, and he collaborated with Bagot Gray on a farce.

It was produced at the Duke of York's and ran (if it can be so expressed) for one night. As Bagot said, it might have made theatrical history if a few days later it had not been beaten by a play

that ran for one act only. Our play was called *Say When*, but we had the consolation of creating a record for the shortest critique when St. John Ervine wrote in the Observer—"Now".

The type represented by Rupert Grayson, over-privileged and under-responsible, was the bane of the two world wars. Grayson tells the story of a friend who had served in the Scots Guards in the first and wanted to join the M. branch of the Admiralty in the second:

I asked him whether he knew any admirals or other serving officers in the Navy, as my chief was influenced by a man's position in life, his service and social connections. Unfortunately, Leslie was unable to think of anyone at the time. But this little matter ended up satisfactorily, because a week later he wrote to me saying that he had just remembered that his grandfather was First Lord of the Admiralty and he hoped it would help. In due course he joined us.

The reason why Mr. Grayson's *Voyage not Completed* is delightful is that it is no longer possible to "swan" through life on the Old Boy network. It seems unlikely that anything as witty will be written by any of those swanning on the New Boy network: such darning-do-dos are being ousted by dubious go-gos.

## Lord B

DAVID FARRER: *G—For God Almighty*, 176pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 30s.

All who contemplate the late Lord Beaverbrook inevitably catch more light than they cast. They stand in curiously similar attitudes, a kind of mesmerized awe bathed in a rich but distinctly lurid glow, as from a stained glass window complete with devils and angels. Even the touch of belated rebellion suggested by Mr. Farrer's title, *G—For God Almighty*, is still heavily under the influence. Mr. Farrer, who was one of Beaverbrook's personal secretaries through most of the war and for a year after it ended, certainly makes his own position clear: this is a worm's-eye view and Jeeves, by comparison, looks like a freedom fighter.

Yet the mocking (which also means self-mocking) humility is not unattractive. "The country needs you, sir," Mr. Farrer tells his master after yet another of the innumerable wartime resignations—Lord Beaverbrook, not Mr. Farrer's. And the relationship is ironically balanced by the fact that the Lord himself is a

shade awed at the prospect of having somebody with a more than usually orthodox background (Rugby, Balliol, the Bar) among his immediate entourage. Without actually turning, the worm manages to keep at least one end up with some sort of style.

There is, of course, something eternally comic in this theme of the man who demanded more subjugation than most women are willing to promise at a modern altar; and some well-matured Fleet Street stories—like the ever-amusing one about Napoleon and his Marshal Ye—have their essential place. As well as the due seasoning of keyholing and calculated indiscretions a talent is revealed, just here and there, for lifting the comedy to a higher level: as when Beaverbrook insists on being presented to the world "warts and all", but flies off the handle when any particular wart is pointed out.

Of the relationship with Churchill, Mr. Farrer tells us that his master was faithful to the Prime Minister after his fashion, even if it was a "rather peculiar fashion". The same tribute could be paid to the Farrer-Beaverbrook relationship.

little far when the system is found to apply also to "the pleasant Midland town of Easthampton, renowned for the manufacture of boots". It is equally distracting to find that book-titles are likewise thus printed in the index; so that *Anna Karenina*, for example, turns out not to be the alias for somebody else.

After the war, Professor Pinto returned to Oxford and, under Sassoon's wing, entered the charmed circle of Garston. He met most of the notables of the early 1920s but does not really say much about them, though one rather likes his description of a "quiet-looking man... sitting in a corner and reading a book", who turns out to be Lady Ottoline's husband. On his professors, Percy Simpson, Walter Raleigh, Nicholas Smith and the rest, he is distinctly more informative, as he is also on his own academic progress.

The present volume ends with his romantic marriage to the daughter of a Swiss farmer, and his death since this book was published leaves unrecorded his later distinguished academic career at Southampton and Nottingham.

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## Babbitt inside out

RASA GUSTAFSSON: *Turning On*. 326pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £2 5s.

A superficial glance at this strange book prompts the idea that it concerns a mere reversal. It looks at first as if the sturdy, competitive, status-seeking individualism of popular American tradition, powered by anxiety to be exactly like the communal image only more so, were turning inwards; as if the Bigger and Better Elephants of the fable were being transmogrified to inhabit a bestiary of hallucinations, as Bigger and Better Pink Elephants.

The reality is not so simple. Wouthanks, think-tanks, meditation groups, encounter groups where people meet to insult one another, disgust groups that cultivate dirty flesh and abhor knives, forks, spoons, and drains, truth labs, love labs, hate labs, and all the rest, are more than bits of Babbitt exploded and turned inside out to proliferate like pull balls; more than a reaction against conformity and technocracy; more than the expression of what Miss Gustafsson calls, "a Third Force between psychoanalysis and behaviourism".

"Expel Nature with a pitchfork and it will nevertheless return", ran the Latin tag. "This seems to be true of Supernature too. That both sorts of suppressed desire may come back in very odd forms, or indeed in chaos, *Turning On* shows all the more clearly because it is written without any attempt at verbal precision, in a formless but characteristic style reminiscent of a glossary, would be useful for non-Americans who cannot guess from the context what is meant by hassles, combos, grockline, vibes, a shrink, freak, and so on.

The blurb states that methods of turning on without drugs are intended "to heighten perception and expand sensory and emotional experience". It does not specify what is to be perceived or experienced. Sometimes the context suggests that this is the appalling joy of mass-

release from self-control, from respect for other identities, and from considering the consequences of one's actions. The Maenads knew this, screaming and tearing their human victims to pieces. The members of the Irish Hellfire Club knew it, setting their servants alight to run in flames down the mountainside. Nazi Germany knew it, expanding by rhythmic marching and chanting the capacity to experience daemonic destructiveness.

Compared with such modes of "turning on" as these, Miss Gustafsson's descriptions of "turn-on games and techniques" sound at first like no more than what might be called tantrum parties for sally self-conscious grown-up children, lighting and yelling, encouraged to shed all inhibitions, personal, sexual, social, in the hope that each may attain some solipsist flash of illumination, some "mini-satori". If this is not achieved, the seeker may at any rate be caterwauled in a great goulash of delicious sensations, without thought of who is cooking it, or why. "Why", writes Miss Gustafsson, "is a dirty word in Gestalt therapy", as one of these procedures is called. So it would seem, is value judgment, for there is no good and evil, only yin and yang.

The games and techniques and their conductors are actually disconcerting and potentially dangerous, in that they develop collective psychoses, and cultivate a common hatred of reason, which is identified with rationalization. There is also a curious incapacity to face facts, well exemplified in the assertion that asceticism is unnecessary to the contemplative life. "You don't need to give up anything," Even if, as is argued, contraception means that sexual intercourse no longer involves the responsibility of bringing children into the world, even if medicine makes possible drunkenness without a hangover, it remains true that humans are liable to focus attention on sensations, for their own sake rather than as means to self-transcendence, and that re-

pression is apt to bring about dependence rather than freedom. It seems, to be free from conditioned emotional reflexes. It is not, however, a deliverance into the capacity for thought or understanding but into a sense of inexpressible glory, such as used to occur at revivalist meetings. It is achieved, of course, by very different methods and interpreted in a very different way. The person concerned is "blasted" out of his frame of reference" by some special technique such as a mental or physical violence, sexual promiscuity or meditation designed as "a quickie short cut to mystical reality". What he hopes to attain is "the basic intuition that man is God". Since in the parlance of this study God is not the name of a being alive, transcendent and mysterious beyond all comprehension, but a term used to indicate a special sort of human experience, a vast overwhelming aesthetic revelation, the "basic intuition" may not be far wrong.

Among the nightmare phantasmas of "L.S.D. trippers", the I-and-Thou Coffee Shop, the Krishna Consciousness Society, Sufism Reorientated Inc., practitioners of Self Style into Art and Life, and two-a-penny avatars, the descriptions of Zen Buddhist communities emerge with a sense of coolness, quiet and disciplined beauty. Miss Gustafsson is, by no means uncritical about the odder groups described. It is extraordinary, though, that in the country of Thomas Merton, she is able confidently to assert that "the West has no concept of *sadhana*, the way" of contemplation. Can this be because the western canon discriminates between good and evil, and insists that the fruits of the spirit are not different varieties of numinous orgasm but love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, forbearance, gentleness, faith, courtesy, temperance and purity?

Isaac Wolfson the Rothschild in the realm of British philanthropy; the Pelikaanstraat remains the diamond centre of Antwerp, and in 1962 the Algerian Jew left not for Israel but for France. As to morale, the diaspora, once satisfied that the chances of anti-semitic cries of "go home" had not increased as a result of Israel's birth, was throughout the years when Israel was still living embattled and under threat of extinction, and under threat of extinction by Arab numbers, suffused by a wave of pride in its bravery, alertness, and technical efficiency; this sentiment reached its zenith in the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 when "even the most fiercely internationalist were brought into a sudden awareness of themselves as Jews".

But, adds Mr. Litvinoff, this sentiment may not endure, for at least two reasons. One is that young Israelites are patronized by foreign communities to whom it is beholden but who have at times sought a way in its affairs. Another - perhaps more important, is that if Israel remains the dominant military force in the Middle East, yet proves inept at handling the political problems that beset a victor, it may forfeit the admiration of a diaspora that has hitherto cherished it as a kind of mission founded on liberal hopes and ideals.

The nineteen years before the six days war forced an obligation upon the Jewish world which sustained the interrelation of the people as a whole, silliness of Israel's condition of the orphanhood.

An unanswerable question is whether this uncongenial facet of Israel is permanent, and if so whether it will cause the western Jew to "move purposefully in the direction of assimilation". Of course he will not disappear altogether.

## Hahn Hall

HENRY L. BRERETON: *Gordonstoun*. 251pp. W. & R. Chambers. £2 10s.

Mr. Brereton's book is a work of love, lovingly executed. To apply to it the normal standards of critical judgment would be a discourteous intrusion into a private ceremony. Beautifully and copiously illustrated, with two large maps, one of them an eighteenth-century facsimile, the book will give enormous pleasure to Old Boys and to admirers of Gordonstoun. It will also, thanks to the honesty which is one of its most endearing features, provide plenty of ammunition for the school's detractors.

An account of the school as it has developed since 1934 is, curiously but successfully, combined with a history of the old estate on to which it was quite fortuitously grafted. Gordonstoun boys are lucky to have had Mr. Brereton as their history master. His passion for old records and documents emerges from every page - that kind of enthusiasm is infectious. He discovers some colourful characters in Gordonstoun's past. There was Sir Robert Gordon "the Wizard", who sold his soul to the devil and paid for it in the traditional way. His son, Sir Robert, was in the habit of throwing people who offended him into the dungeon, "a nasty dark vault with an iron grate having neither door, window, nor chimney". Another notorious member of the family, Sir William Gordon Cumming, was accused of cheating at cards at a party which included Edward VII as Prince of Wales, and was ostracized by society for the rest of his life. "This did not prevent him from marrying an American heiress who restored the house and estate from the decay into which it had fallen."

The second half of the book begins with an account of Kurt Hahn's ideas and their application in Germany, England. Through Mr. Brereton's sympathetic eyes, we come to understand many features of the school, originally developed in response to German conditions, which on even repellent to British eyes. Brereton, successively *Director of Studies*, *Headmaster*, and *Principal* of Gordonstoun as "sparring partner" to German conditions, and a well yes, they do, early morning run and athletic break, and spend their time on ships, or weeks, but for more than a week they are in some centrally-heated classroom, and studies. (The underlined by no fewer than photographs of the library and stages of construction) Mr. Brereton makes as much as he can of the "aggressive" elements in Gordonstoun's history, and the lack of emphasis on the and exams; attempts to mark boundaries; efforts to serve the local community. It is even a whisper about cooking. Now that Gordonstoun, by its own efforts, is so firmly established as a permanent British institution, strange to think that twenty years ago it was in serious danger of closure. It was only saved by the devotedness of its founder, who was able to see that his English school of fanatics, and still prevents Gordonstoun from becoming a run-of-the-mill public school. One picture catches the flavour of the place: two small boys creeping up a rope across a river, terror in their eyes, the other, the founder's rule that those who must immediately go to the castle or oil to clear the lads of the system.

Dr. Dinger begins with a fairly full introduction dealing with the history of writing and its importance, with the relationship of writing to early civilization, and various stages through which it has passed. These are classified as pictographic, ideographic, phonetic, and alphabetic. The single sign may be of any shape and generally no connection exists between the external form of the

symbol and the sound which it represents.

Phonetic writing may be either syllabic or alphabetic. In syllabic writing each one of a set of phonetic symbols represents a syllable or a vowel, when this constitutes a syllable, so that a combination of such signs conveys the spoken word: for example, the three signs for "family" make up the word spoken as "family". Such a system, however, becomes very cumbersome, especially if used for a language which has suffered serious phonetic decay: for example, such a word as "strength" would have to be written "se-re-ne-ge-the" or the like, which would be very unsatisfactory. The alphabetic is the last and most highly developed system of writing: it requires a strictly limited number of symbols (e.g., twenty-two for Hebrew and twenty-four for the English language), and these can be used for any language.

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Having described the various forms of writing thus far in general terms, Dr. Dinger goes on to give some account of its development in all known languages from Chinese with many thousands of signs, Assyro-Babylonian with 640, Hebrew with twenty-two, Greek with twenty-four and Latin with twenty-six signs, from Chinese spoken by millions to Ahom still used by scarcely 100 people; not all have yet been fully deciphered. For example early Chinese writing on bones with 3,000 characters of which only 600 have been made out. Naturally, no one can know anything like all these languages, and the bulk of Dr. Dinger's material is drawn by him at second hand from many writers; yet he succeeds in making most of it as clear as possible, although what he says is best said on those languages with which he is familiar. Even so, the attentive reader will feel here and there that something is unclear, doubtful or even false and may even detect gaps in his own particular field of study.

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## Comparisons

There are times when the traffic in literature begins to resemble that on the roads, and it seems equally impossible for it to go on or to cease. Like everyone else involved, the academic users of literature both contribute to the congestion and suffer from it; many have been heard to grumble, and some prophesy the end. How agreeable, therefore, to be told by Professor Henry Gifford in his short book on *Comparative Literature* (99pp, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 16s. Paperback, 8s.) that the student of this rather oddly named discipline can still feel "exhilaration in the open spaces before him, the large and generous vistas, where so much is yet to be tried".

Comparative literature is a misnomer, for the word "comparative" describes, of course, a characteristic not of the literature to be studied but of the manner of studying it. Comparison is one of the oldest means of learning to appreciate and discriminate in matters of art, and perhaps of learning to think at all. Professor Gifford reminds us how

many poets, in the present century no less than in former times, learn by imitating, and not infrequently by translating, foreign models: even if Latin and Greek authors were not always thought of explicitly as "foreign". The educated reader of the past, too, who recognized allusions to the Classics and to the Bible was likewise a comparatist without knowing it. Comparative reading in the modern sense began to develop some 200 years ago, when the sole authority of that twin tradition weakened; then Shakespeare appeared as indispensable to a cultured German mind as Sophocles, and a Spanish or Scottish ballad as inspiring as a Horatian ode. Professor Gifford wants us to see that a new tradition has been growing up, and that we have the possibility of realizing something which Goethe already believed in and called "World Literature". Indeed, if we do not measure our rights of possession too pedantically by the standards of the single-subject degree examination, we may feel that we have by now some relationship to western, if not to world, literature. There is a sense in which Dante, Cervantes, Goethe, or Tolstoy are ours, and have as much to say to us as any native writer.

One of Professor Gifford's most attractive ideas is that a student interested in other literatures, besides his own, should regularly spend some time on translating poems, or key passages in other types of writing, into English. "Translation involves him from the start in literature as a participant; the reader also becomes a writer." Instead of travelling the well-worn route of critical comment, the comparatist has a chance to strike out on his own, as it were, into the much harder ground of original expression. No matter that he will probably not get very far; the object of his exercise is not simply to produce a perfect translation. He need

only explore the difficulties, compare the dull shapelessness of a literal rendering with the formal qualities of the original, or attempt a free version and see what has to be neglected, or changed; failure can be quite as illuminating as success.

Naturally, this kind of study presupposes that the student has a good knowledge of a foreign language, and it makes even greater demands on the teacher, if he is to judge nuances of meaning and tone in two languages. In fact, some linguistic ability is not uncommon in those coming up to British universities, and among those who teach there many have a foreign tongue; unfortunately, however, language instruction is not always very closely associated with literary appreciation in actual university courses. A valuable opportunity may be being wasted here, which Professor Gifford's proposals regarding "Comparative Studies at the University"—a much better way of describing the subject—could enable us to make better use of.

Professor Gifford's proposals challenge conventional methods of teaching literature in several ways. For instance, he assumes that a student whose native language is English will develop his sensitivity to literature most fully by studying English literature; the implication is strong that, unless he does this, he will never have much feeling for a foreign literature either. Now, it is not difficult to form an impression of modern language studies in Britain which confirms the rightness of this view. Doubtless the trouble starts in school, when we are faced with "Nine French Poets" before we really know what one poet is, and it never quite that we suffer inevitably some limitation in our dealings with any literature in a language not our own; his insistence that English literature should lie at the centre of any course of comparative studies, like his plea for constant practice in translation,

is meant to ensure that a linguistic limitation should not leave us limited in all our literary responses.

Any proposal to marry English and modern language studies is liable to arouse hostility in both partners, though there is somewhat more readiness to admit a little foreign experience into the English household than there is among the linguists to admit much English. There exist arrangements for taking a joint degree, of course, but in practice this usually means that a student visits separately his two permanently estranged mentors, an experience that is surely bad for the young. What Professor Gifford again implies, rather than says, is that comparative studies must be taught by people like himself, who read foreign literatures with the same personal pleasure and scholarly purpose as they read their own. Example is everything, exhortation nothing: the present generation of students, perhaps more than any other, judges a subject by the practice and character of the man who expounds it. Comparative studies are particularly challenging in this respect, because there is not an established body of material which the student can be told to "get on with", but rather a number of luminous names—Hazard, Auerbach, Wellek, Bowen—by whose light professor and student can set out on further adventures in comparison.

It is in the nature of the subject that the results depend on the examples chosen, and there are no final rules governing this choice. There are obvious lines of general direction, like the history of a genre, or a literary theme, or the sensibility of a period, but any attempt at historical completeness will sink a comparative enterprise under a mass of detail. Similarly, there are dangers in trying to force too much material to fit a single concept or explanation. The comparatist has to recognize that he must take his bearings by reference as much to a principle of

difference as to a principle. This means both being more free in his range, and that he must be more evaluating his results. He must let himself, and perhaps, but let him not force his conclusions about a humour in European literature.

The crux of comparative studies lies in learning to choose a *tertium comparationis*. Gifford here noticeably rejects the traditional literary aim: "to apprehend each separate writer's work as an individual, to recognize its individual tones, rhythms, internal structure." That is to say, the purpose of comparison along broad lines is not particular aesthetic qualities, but higher relief. We may

whether "comparative" has to veer in this direction, readers will always be moved in varieties of content than in varieties of form. Gifford is, in fact, equally at both readings, and gives us hints about what a comparative study, as well as regards content, as well as regards style, in his chapters "Mind of Europe" and "Accent and Tradition". The latter, exclusively upon the poet, either of content or of form, even a work of literature, comparative studies have a chance of illuminating each other, or of old evidence is reinterpreted.

Prehistorians at least, in their daily developing studies, are undisturbed by this, and to many the necessity of such change brings an excitement and a challenge to their work which would be lacking in more static circumstances. The layman senses something of the nature of intellectual stimulus, and may be repelled by the altering viewpoints revealed by the process of discovery. But what he, and unfortunately some specialists in the field, find more difficult of acceptance is radical modification of the great assumptions, the general theories, that have been advanced to contain the archaeological facts within what looked like ordered systems.

Indeed, perhaps it is change, not stability, that in that of the prehistorians current on prehistoric Egypt and Neolithic Crete, often attributed to a Mother Goddess cult, and has made a penetrating analysis and commentary on the evidence thus assembled, with comparanda from mainland Greece and the prehistoric Near East. In a second, smaller but in an up-to-date and illuminating study of Upper Palaeolithic cave art, recognized for what it was from 1880, and first attributed to "sympathetic magic" (and so to prehistoric religious concepts) by Reinach in 1903, both books therefore concern themselves with assembling facts, and testing these against the theories currently used in their interpretation. The theories (or assumptions) are concerned with prehistoric religion.

The figurines in human form come in Egypt, mainly from tombs, and elsewhere from various vaguely domestic contexts, and on the whole belong to farming cultures mainly without a metal technology until the fifth and fourth millennia B.C. Of ninety-five Egyptian figurines, fifteen were male, fifty-one female, and twenty-nine indeterminate; in late Neolithic Crete the percentages were 9.5 male, 38.5 female, 52.0 indeterminate. These and many other characteristics are exhaustively tabulated and compared in *Anthropomorphic Figurines of Predynastic Egypt and Neolithic Crete*, thus providing a firm basis of fact against which a less detailed assessment of analogous finds can be placed, and the stage set for testing the observational data against a prevalent theory of interpretation, that of regarding these and similar figurines (as for instance in some cultures of Neolithic south-eastern Europe) as representations of, or closely associated with, a hypothetical prehistoric Mother Goddess.

Hypothetical she is indeed, but it seems possible to pin down her origins rather precisely: the view that there was a widespread cult of a Mother Goddess in European prehistory, expressed archaeologically in female figurines, was apparently first put forward in explicit terms by Arthur Evans in the first volume of

attention Jacquetta Hawkes is looking for. Dr. Ucko has produced a monumental corpus of the anthropomorphic figurines of Predynastic Egypt and Neolithic Crete, often attributed to a Mother Goddess cult, and has made a penetrating analysis and commentary on the evidence thus assembled, with comparanda from mainland Greece and the prehistoric Near East. In a second, smaller but in an up-to-date and illuminating study of Upper Palaeolithic cave art, recognized for what it was from 1880, and first attributed to "sympathetic magic" (and so to prehistoric religious concepts) by Reinach in 1903, both books therefore concern themselves with assembling facts, and testing these against the theories currently used in their interpretation. The theories (or assumptions) are concerned with prehistoric religion.

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# The redundant Mother Goddess

## STICKING TO THE PREHISTORIC EVIDENCE



The "Sarcophagus" at Trois-Frères. Brœnli's drawing on the left, and a recent drawing on the right.

to clean his of cant—it is a mode of talking in society; but don't think foolishly. It might be well to stop the mode of talking in archaeological society too, if only to avoid such naive dogmatism as in phrases such as "the Millarians worshipped their ancestors and a Mother Goddess" which appears in a recent highly reputable book on Iberian prehistory when dealing with the third millennium B.C.

All we can suggest is a number of possible alternatives to explain the making of prehistoric clay models, whether anthropomorphic, or representing animals, carts or even furniture in miniature, which tend to be forgotten in discussions of the human representations. At least no one has invented a Cart God or a Chair Cull. It is unreasonable to seek for a single explanation when so many could be applicable, and least reasonable to invent, by a circular argument from some of the objects themselves, a Mother Goddess, responsible for their manufacture in the first place. If we cannot find an explanation by valid inference of the type used in other archaeological study, let us be honest and admit that archaeological evidence can never by itself inform us of many of the most interesting, important and far-reaching aspects of human behaviour in the past. "If politics is the art of the possible," wrote Kierkegaard, "research is surely the art of the soluble. Both are immensely practical-minded affairs." Let us deal with archaeological problems which may be capable of solution first: heaven knows, there are enough of them waiting for examination.

Can we in fact say anything worthwhile about prehistoric religion when it is really prehistoric and so by definition unilluminated by contemporary levels? Does the evidence for the past of non-literate societies preclude by its very nature a knowledge of beliefs, and should we therefore settle for a prehistory without gods, an atheistic archaeology? This problem presents itself in acute form when we encounter prehistoric art, and seek to interpret it in terms other than that of our personal and immediate emotive responses to it. In the context of Romano-Celtic sculpture, Professor Pigott has recently pointed to the fallacy of projecting into it "our own emotions and aesthetic presuppositions," and then "making the unwarranted and unverifiable assumption" that it "conveyed the same emotional impact" to its makers. In the study of the mural art of the Upper Palaeolithic, found in a hundred or so caves in south-west France and adjacent Spain and spread over a period from about 30,000 to 10,000 years ago, this projection has been the unacknowledged presupposition behind much of the voluminous literature, and we turn with relief to a cool look at the whole question in *Palaeolithic Cave Art*.

Some of the peculiar difficulties of the problem are not always appreciated. The vast time-span of at least 80,000 human generations over which Palaeolithic art is spread makes it impossible to think of it in ordinary historical terms, or in those of schools or traditions consciously pursued, or even of consistent "reasons" behind its manifestations. There is little accurate dating within the whole period for individual murals, and the animal representations are chosen without overt reason from the available fauna, and show no dominance of species favoured for food. And although now known for close on a century,

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# Commentary

After three embarrassing months at the site of a challenge by the *emigres* to Italy's "culture industry", the Milan publishing house of Il Saggiatore has been liquidated. During this time the firm's humble economic failings were elevated into spectacular ideological crimes by the fiery theoreticians of the left and its hopes of solvency diminished with each day that its normal operations were interrupted. The past record and future plans of Il Saggiatore were dignified ones and the firm's failure is a lamentable event for a country where few other publishers have shown a comparable intellectual rigour: there is a chance that it will be absorbed now by another publisher and invited to continue under its own name.

Il Saggiatore was started ten years ago by one of the two sons of Arnoldo Mondadori, by far the largest publisher in Italy. Mondadori, indeed, is quoted as the thirty-ninth largest company in the country, an evidence of capitalist grandeur which will not have done its offshoot much good. For eight years Il Saggiatore remained within the Mondadori organization, with its highly efficient printing, publicity and distribution services; and according to its opponents it was also inheriting much of that firm's noxious paternalism. When it became wholly separate late in 1967, the staff increased from a dozen or so to about eighty, and the publishing policy became too high-minded for the firm's own good.

Il Saggiatore's list included characteristic names from all over: Levi-Strauss, Huxley, Sartre, Teilhard de Chardin, as well as Italian writers like

Eugenio Montale, Elio Vittorini and Emilio Cecchi. Ironically, in view of what has subsequently happened there, the firm was also ready to publish key texts from the 1968 May Revolution in Paris. In addition to this, it sponsored specialist reviews which could not otherwise have survived, such as *Le Scienze*, *Dialoghi di archeologia* and *L'Espresso*. Supported by salaries that were reputed to be a good deal higher than the average in Italian publishing, earlier this year it was clear that Il Saggiatore's lofty cultural hopes meant low commercial returns, and were dismissed. This move does not seem to have been made with much tact and was easily politicized, being interpreted as an attempt to get rid of undesirable elements from within the firm.

Already in March of this year there was an action committee at Il Saggiatore, which helped to draw up a manifesto about "The culture industry as the scene of the production of the system's ideology". The text

NEXT WEEK  
 The Tennyson Manuscripts at Trinity College, Cambridge, with a commentary by Christopher Ricks.

of this is reprinted in the latest issue of a little red review called *Che Sera* (via Angelo Mosso, 18, 20127 Milan), a "bulletin of avant-garde criticism and action". The manifesto is signed by Alessandro Cascella, who has contributed another analysis of the Saggiatore affair to the July issue of *Quintessence*—a cultural review that has become more and more politically committed.

Ultimately, last May, some of the employees at Il Saggiatore went on strike; then, in June, they upgraded this to a sit-in, in which they were joined by workers from other publishing firms. What the activists were demanding was a greater say in the running of the firm and an end to the "alienation" of intellectuals: the journalists of the *Figaro* seem to have won and the same freedom from capitalist pressures which our own Free Communications Group is now campaigning for. Unfortunately, their often sensible complaints and demands have generally been camouflaged in the traditional *marxist* or perhaps *unofficial* prose and the particular problems of Il Saggiatore were drowned in rabid generalities.

The firm was clearly not going to be allowed to plead the seriousness of the books it published; these were mocked as manifestations of a "sacred" culture and as an extension of the old bourgeois academicism, or "imperialism". In a mainly low proportion of book-shaky hold and its continued pluralism can certainly not be taken for granted, so that it is alarming to find such arguments, themselves imported from France, being used so polemically. There can be little virtue in a *content-free* whose target is a publisher already in difficulties because his intellectual ambitions were running far ahead of his

Boswell: 'So, Sir, you laugh at schemes of political improvement.'  
 Johnson: 'Why, Sir, schemes of political improvement are very laughable things.'

Political Violence and Public Order  
 Robert Benewick

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*New Society* 63s

The Farther Shores of Politics  
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'A grand survey of America's minority political groupings, which will be invaluable as a work of reference'.  
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The Sociology of British Communism  
 Kenneth Newton

'Newton works out his analysis with great ingenuity and sophistication... having dispelled a whole cloud of misconceptions'.  
*A.H. Hanson*  
*New Society* 50s

Allen Lane  
 The Penguin Press



















is concerned with an ecological account of major habitats in Britain followed by a guide to field studies. As the book is intended for young naturalists and teachers it is a pity there is no scale on the diagrams, especially where microscopic and macroscopic forms occur on the same figure.

#### Social Studies

ALLAND, ALEXANDER. *Evolution and Human Behaviour*. 243pp. Tavistock Publications, 36s. (Paperback, 18s.).

After an outline of evolutionary theory, Mendelian rules of inheritance and the chemical basis of heredity, Dr. Alland presents a new approach in the study of behavioural genetics and behavioural evolution. A consideration of culture and human behaviour follows, with a discussion on social evolution and some potential empirical applications of the biological model in anthropological research. Dr. Alland emphasizes the need to be concerned with more than structural evolution in interpreting the development of the human race. It is a broad approach clearly expressed, explaining technical terms where necessary and drawing on pertinent data from other scientific fields.

GUSS, JEROME. *The Story of Fulfilled Prophecy*. 211pp. Cassell, 25s.

The author of this book died before it went to press, and it has not been equipped with any indication of her sources. It could have been a valuable quarry of information, but as it stands it is no more than a muddled amalgam of fact and fiction. There is no bibliography and the few references given are totally inadequate. There is no point in writing "Milton" says in his "Antiquities" without mentioning that Milton was a very learned eighteenth-century Italian historian of Iereticism, scholarly accuracy. There is equally little sense in citing the romantic Geoffrey of Monmouth as a reliable authority on Merlin, said to have been born about 485 A.D. Incidentally, his prophecies are quoted in the same sort of English doggerel verse as that ascribed to Mother Shipton, who lived a good thousand years later. Nothing is said of either's source. Both were probably drawn from the sixteenth and seventeenth-century almanacs—discussed in another connexion: why not say so?

Hermes Trismegistus, that mythical figure so ably deflated by Dr. Frances Yates, is accepted as an historical person, and many unverifiable statements are made about the Druids and the Magi. The range of anecdote runs from ancient Egypt to modern America, swerving eastward to Tibet and China and westward to Mexico, and eddying round Europe. Some of the stories are in fact authentic, but it is impossible to pick them out without previous knowledge. There are also curious misinterpretations, as when Malachi, prophesying that there would be no more Popes after "Peter of Rome" (four reigns hence) is seen as "a high ranking prelate predicting the downfall of his own Church" whereas he plainly believed he foresaw the end of the world and the Last Judgment.

LIVINGSTONE, ARTHUR. *Social Policy in Developing Countries*. 119pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 16s. (Paperback, 8s.).

A rather pedestrian but useful account of a profoundly important issue. The book succeeds in making clear the enormity of the problems barring the way to social and economic progress in many developing countries. While emphasizing those common human needs which confront all governments, it raises some tricky questions faced by those called on to plan social development in countries so different from our own and each other.

RIDLEY, F. and RUSSELL, J. *Public Administration in France*. 391pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 40s. Professor Ridley and Professor Russell have issued a new edition of their valuable guide to public administration in France, originally published in 1964. The text has not been altered but a substantial chapter of some 50 pages has been added to describe administrative reforms carried out between 1965 and 1967. The bibliography has also been extended.

ZELINS, IRVING. *Ideology and the Development of Sociological Theory*. 326pp. Prentice-Hall, £3.5s.

This is a useful, though rather pedestrian, survey of the development of sociological thought from the thinkers of the Enlightenment, through the romantic-conservative reaction and its impact upon Saint-Simon and Comte, to Marx and the later theorists (among them Weber, Durkheim, Par-

son and Mannheim) who elaborated their ideas to a great extent in opposition to Marxism. Written from a point of view which emphasizes the critical and radical character of sociological theory, it complements such studies as those by Raymond Aron and Robert Nisbet which have a more conservative bias, but it is less penetrating and original, and it relies quite heavily upon secondary sources. Its value to students would have been enhanced if the author had supplied more extensive notes, offering some guidance to further reading, especially on the more controversial points of interpretation.

#### Sports and Pastimes

CHRISTENSEN, ARNE EMIL JR. *Boats of the North*. Translated by Elizabeth Seeger. 94pp. Bo. Olav. *Skiing Traditions in Norway*. Translated by Helen M. Corlett. 126pp. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget.

These profusely and in most cases well illustrated books are two in a series "Heritage of Norway". Mr. Christensen's book, *Boats of the North*, presents a survey of boat-building in Norway. However, up until the sixteenth century the author has to draw upon the whole of the Scandinavian peninsula for his evidence. Though in fact the waterways and the sea were necessary as highways for trade and transport, there does not seem to have been a distinctive type of Norwegian boat. (Mr. Christensen, when discussing the possible reconstruction of the remains of boats buried as votive offerings, even has to turn to the "dig" at Sutton Hoo.) In the English context it is interesting to learn that the Viking invaders did not arrive under the picturesque red and white square sail of children's history books. All that is left in the present century of what boat-building tradition there was are yachts and pleasure crafts.

The early part of Mr. Bo's book is the more interesting: the same is true for Mr. Christensen's volume. The prehistory and the evidence from archaeological discoveries—and there are some charming cave-paintings illustrated in both volumes—are of interest to the layman; skiing, however, was of much more importance than boat-building in Norwegian life. The ski is assumed to have been preceded by the snow-shoe, and the earliest pictorial record

of skis in use dates from c. 2000 B.C. In early mythology the ski was a symbol of speed, and skiing and hunting were linked. The faster hunter is the more efficient—more blessed by the gods. In the pantheon of Norse deities one can find a ski god, Ull, and a ski goddess, Skade. Skiing was a means of travelling over the snow-covered landscape of Norway, but in the Middle Ages we can still find the connection between hunting and skiing and up until the Union with Sweden when they were cut—ski-borne troops were an integral part of the Norwegian defences. After the middle of the last century the history of skiing becomes the history of its growth as a competitive sport, though the first prize contest dates from the 1750s. The first sporting events were skijumping contests. The latter half of *Skiing Traditions in Norway* deals with all the Norwegian national races, jumping, slalom and cross-country events. These episodes are made the more vivid with contemporary press notices, but have not the interest to hold a reader other than a dedicated skier, or a Norwegian patriot.

#### Transport

DICKHAM, BARON F. (Editor). *Transport History, 1968*. 343pp. Newton Abbott: David and Charles, £2.10s.

This is Volume I of the new periodical *Transport History* edited by Baron F. Dickham, bound up in permanent form. The three issues which compose volume I contain current notes, book reviews and articles on such matters as canal history in different parts of the United Kingdom, the engineers of English port improvement and motor bus services in the Gwent area of South Wales. Of particular interest to railway historians are a detailed account of the development of Swindon as a railway town by Kenneth Hudson and a portrait of F. W. Webb, autocrat of Crewe, by W. H. Chaloner.

NOEL, O. S. L.N.E.R. *Steam*. 292pp. Newton Abbott: David and Charles, £3.3s.

Mr. Noel examines the catholic collection of locomotives which the L.N.E.R., on its formation in 1923, acquired from the Great Central, the Great Eastern, the North Eastern, the North British and the Great Northern and then describes what Sir

Nigel Gresley, the Chief Mechanical Engineer of the new company, with them and what new designs. These latter were metalled-bunch, the brilliant greyhound of the line, the Moguls, the giant Mikados, rest. This was perhaps the flowering of the steam age. remembers Maillard and m.p.h. in 1938, but in 1940, three weeks out of the twice reached 113 m.p.h. attained an average of 100 forty-three miles. Exhilarated and exultantly received Noel, the most engaging of table-talkers.

PLOWDEN, DAVID. *Far Steam*. 154pp. Bradbury, Mont: The Stephen G. Distributed by Wynd. Stacey, £4.4s.

Although there are some photographs of steam locomotives in Canada and the United States, the chief glory of this collection is by an American photographer is the stunning devoted to tug, lighter, boats, ferries, and cargo across the Great Lakes, and the St. Lawrence and the Hudson. It is a photographer of imagination, he has a keen eye for subtleties of ship and cargo and is as intrigued by the ties of a dredger or the pike by a set of tools as by a dining saloon.

#### Travel

CHANE, ILKA. *The Far East*. 262pp. W.H.M. An indefatigable American her travels in Africa and the Orient. With her dog, who takes the snapshots, she flora, the fauna, the antiquities and even you get a travel book that the menu on the aircraft, etymology and Greek and assesses Garibaldi and careful list of what to see and do.

In our review on July 31, Willy Brandt's *A Peace in Europe* was available in its as well as in paperback, publishers, Weidenfeld and have asked us to say that paperback edition.



## Houses

Houses of every dimension can be seen and sold in the columns of The Times Educational Supplement. Advertisement space just 6s a line (minimum three lines). Contact Carole Clenden: The Times Educational Supplement, Printing House Square, London EC4 01-236 3000 extension 372

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Further information may be obtained from the Librarian, British Library of Political and Economic Science, Houghton Street, London, W.C2, by whom applications, including a full curriculum vitae and giving the names of not more than three referees, must be received not later than 30th August, 1969.

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Charles Birnie, Secretary to the Governor

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